



The Flight Review By: Mike Halloran FAA Aviation Safety Inspector

It strikes when a pilot least expects it, the subject of not staying as current as one would like to be might come up in friendly hangar talk. The conversation might cause you to think when you'd been last signed off for a flight review. "Gosh, I could have sworn I just did one of those things about a month ago", might be one of the things you mumble to yourself as you flip at the back of your logbook. "Can it be that time again?" "When am I do anyway?"

There's something about a Flight review that subconsciously makes pilots feel uneasy. The feeling of not having enough time to schedule one might play a factor, financial considerations might also play a part. But, the one feeling that's the worst to deal with might be in line with personal performance. "Gee, I wonder what the Flight Instructor's going to have me do?" Or, more honestly ask yourself, "I wonder if I can perform as well as I used to?"

The Flight Review concept is rather simple and straight forward, every two years a review of the procedures and tasks, that were required when you first got your certificate, now need to be demonstrated to a flight instructor, who can play the part of an *helpful* examiner.

Another question you might ask yourself: "What do I need to study up on?" Well, I'm glad you asked.

Remember a paragraph back I said that you'd have to demonstrate procedures and tasks, to a flight instructor? Well, those tasks and procedures can be found in the Practical Test Standards - PTS, pertinent to the grade of your pilot certificate. This is the main grading criteria that you will be measured up against when you do a review.

The PTS booklet has been chastised for being too vague and general. Well, it has to be! The authors had to come up with a set of grading standards that's applicable to any/all types of aircraft that a pilot would take a test in. I've heard many a pilot say that there is too much left open to interpretation with the way the PTS is written, but I'd like to offer that aviation has not been mandated to that strict of a level yet, telling us precisely how to fly. Think of the PTS as a guide to get you thinking in the right direction taking in consideration; the aircraft you're in, the part of the country you're flying in, etc..

Does the Practical Test Standards tell a pilot *how* to actually perform the maneuver? Simply put, no. As stated before, this is merely a grading criteria booklet. However, directly below the heading of each task is a list of references that can be studied to further shed light on the subject. Armed with this information you've got the full picture on what will be asked of you.

But, merely going through the Practical Test Standards does not mean that you're done gathering resources. The FAR's say that a review of Part 91 is in order. Obviously, the depth of the discussion/review will be left up to the instructor, but it would be well worth your while to obtain a copy of FAR 91 in your arsenal of study material.

"So, where can I get a hold of all this study material, anyway?" At most municipal airports, pilot shops stock PTS books, FAR's and most material needed for research. Another way is getting on the Internet. The following sites should get you started:

- For FAR's: http://www.faa.gov/avr/afs/fars/far_idx.htm
- For the PTS's: <http://afs600.faa.gov/>
- For Advisory Circulars: <http://www.faa.gov/circdir.htm>

Just remember, a pilot cannot "fail" a flight review. What is required is that the pilot spend at least an hour on the ground and an hour in the air for the review. If more than that is needed think of it as money well spent to get you "back-in-the-saddle" of safe aviation.

Additionally, FAR 61.56(e) states that a pilot who accomplishes at least one phase of an FAA-sponsored Pilot Proficiency Award Program ("Wings Program"), may substitute that award for a Flight Review. You'll hear more about this program in future, but in the mean time if you visit the website:

<http://www.faa.gov/fsdo/orl/wings.htm>

It will provide you with all the necessary information.

A sad fact about proficiency is that it goes hand in hand with currency. When a pilot has an accident, incident, pilot deviation, or any other situation that requires investigating, a pilot will be asked to provide dates of his/her currency. This will always include the date of the last Flight Review. It's at that time that many unaware pilots find out that they have been flying out of currency. Don't let this happen to you. Write it on your medical, placard it on your panel, do whatever it takes to remind yourself that it may be "that time again!"

Upcoming Events

Know of a meeting that could be turned into a “Wings” qualifying program? Contact this office at least three months in advance so that the proper arrangements can be made and we’ll advertise it here?

Saturday, January 26, 2002, 5:00 p.m.

Subject: The 39th. Annual Industry Awards Banquet.

Presented by: Aviation Safety Advisory Group, Arizona Flight Standards District Office

Sponsored by: Federal Aviation Administration, Aircraft Electronics Association, National Association of State Aviation Officials, ARSA, AOPA Air Safety Foundation, Women In Aviation, National Association of Flight Instructors, Helicopter Association International, NATA, NBAA, GAMA, EAA, Professional Aviation Maintenance Association.



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